

Park Significance

A park's *statement of significance* describes qualities of places and resources that make the park nationally important. The *statement of significance* is a critical element of the planning process, guiding priority-setting for resource preservation, interpretive and educational programs, and other visitor opportunities. During the early stages of this GMP process, a draft statement of significance will be developed and refined through public review and comment.

A statement of significance takes into account the intent of Congress, the unique resources contained within the boundary of the park, and the wide range of stories associated with the site's history. For Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, enabling legislation in 1930 and 1935 provided language indicating the park purpose. In 1930 Congress passed an act



The reconstructed courthouse now houses the park's visitor center.

"...to acquire at the scene of the said surrender approximately one acre of land ...for the purpose of commemorating the termination of the War Between the States...and for the further purpose of honoring those

who engaged in this tremendous conflict." In 1935 Congress authorized "...that when title to all the land, structures, and other property within a distance of one and one-half miles from the Appomattox Court House site...such area or areas shall be...established, dedicated and set apart as a public monument for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."

The section below offers components of a draft *statement of significance* for the park. These points are presented for review and discussion. We will be seeking your comments as part of the upcoming public scoping process that is described in this newsletter. The text of the refined draft statement will be provided in the next newsletter.

Components of the draft statement of significance:

- On April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee, commander of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, surrendered to Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant, commander of all Federal armies, bringing the Civil War to its effective end. Appomattox Court House National Historical Park is nationally significant as the site of these events and of the efforts over time to memorialize and commemorate them.
- Lee and Grant exhibited exemplary leadership at Appomattox Court House. The offer of generous surrender terms by Grant and the acceptance of those terms by Lee, and his urging that others do likewise, provided a foundation for an enduring peace. Appomattox Court House is significant as the place where these generous terms and conditions were negotiated.

- Appomattox Court House has long been regarded as a symbol of reunification for the country. The events associated with the surrender represent the beginning of the establishment of peace in a united nation. But the surrender did not immediately bring an end to the conflicts that had divided the nation, and the consequences of the pivotal events that took place at Appomattox Court House in April 1865 are still unfolding. The park signifies the place and marks the moment of transition from a nation divided to one attempting to meet the promise of reunification.



A 1997 photograph shows an aerial view of the village.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public participation is critical to the success of the planning effort. The public participation component of the planning process has the following purposes:

- To identify issues of public concern which may affect the GMP;
- To provide opportunities for the public to review and comment on alternative proposals for the park's future;
- To include a broad cross-section of participants who can bring a wide variety of perspectives to the process;
- To open channels of communication with national, regional, and local interest groups that can contribute to the planning process;
- To achieve, whenever possible, a broad consensus in support of the final GMP and NPS efforts to fulfill its mission at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park; and
- To develop a supportive constituency for the park.

How You Can Get Involved

- Here's how you can stay informed and get involved:
- Attend one of the public meetings listed on the back page.
 - Read this and future newsletters. Future newsletters will keep you up-to-date on the progress that's been made.
 - Visit the park's web site at <http://www.nps.gov/apco/> to keep up-to-date. Provide comments and suggestions at APCO_GMP@nps.gov.
 - To be added to our mailing list or to send written comments, address correspondence to: Superintendent of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, P.O. Box 218, Appomattox, VA 24522.